

HAMILTON
BROOK
SMITH &
REYNOLDS, P.C.

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530 VIRGINIA ROAD
P.O. BOX 9133
CONCORD, MA 01742-9133
TEL (978) 341-0036
FAX (978) 341-0136
www.hbsr.com

MUNROE H. HAMILTON
(1906-1984)

DAVID E. BROOK
JAMES M. SMITH
LEO R. REYNOLDS
JOHN L. DUPRE
DAVID J. BRODY
MARY LOU WAKIMURA
ALICE O. CARROLL
N. SCOTT PIERCE
SUSAN G. L. GLOVSKY
DOREEN M. HOGLE
ROBERT T. CONWAY
RODNEY D. JOHNSON
DAVID J. THIBODEAU, JR.
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STEVEN G. DAVIS
DEIRDRE E. SANDERS

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JOSEPH M. MARAJA
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KEVIN T. SHAUGHNESSY
CHARLTON SHEN
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RALPH TREMENTOZZI
KEITH J. WOOD

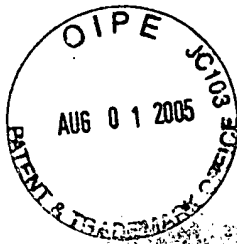
OF COUNSEL
ELIZABETH W. MATA
DARRELL L. WONG

PATENT AGENTS
SUSAN M. ABELLEIRA
ALEXANDER AKHIEZER
KRAIG ANDERSON
VIVIAN J. TANNOKH-MAGIN
PAMELA A. TORPEY
ROBERT H. UNDERWOOD

TECHNOLOGY SPECIALISTS
KAMILAH ALEXANDER
PAUL G. ALLOWAY
THOMAS J. ARRIA
ERIC M. BALICKY
SUSAN C. KELLY
BOOYONG SHIM LIM
MICHAEL M. YAMAUCHI

MICHAEL KEWESHAN
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA J. FORGUE
ADMINISTRATOR OF
PATENT AND
TRADEMARK PRACTICE



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July 29, 2005

Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Re: Appellants: Robert L. Stewart, Ramanathan R. Kavasseri and
Sandra C. Durham

Application No.: 09/317,746

Filed: May 24, 1999

Confirmation No.: 9501

Title: PRIORITIZING NETWORK MANAGEMENT TRAFFIC

Docket No.: 2386.1005-000

Sir:

Transmitted herewith is an Appeal Brief for filing in the subject application. The Appeal Brief is filed pursuant to the Notice of Appeal received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on June 27, 2005.

1. ☐ Appellant hereby petitions to extend the time for filing an Appeal Brief for ☐ month(s) from ☐ to ☐.
2. ☐ A ☐ month extension of time to extend the time for filing an Appeal Brief from ☐ to ☐ was filed on ☐ with payment of a \$☐ fee.
☐ Appellant hereby petitions for an additional ☐ month extension of time for filing an Appeal Brief from ☐ to ☐.
3. ☐ A Request for Oral Hearing before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences is being filed concurrently herewith.

4. Fees are submitted for the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Extension of Time for [] month(s)	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional Extension of Time:		
	Fee for Extension ([] mo.)	\$	_____
	Less fee paid ([] mo.)	- \$	_____
	Balance of fee due	\$	0
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Appeal Brief	\$	500
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	\$	_____
	TOTAL	\$	500

5. The method of payment for the total fees is as follows:

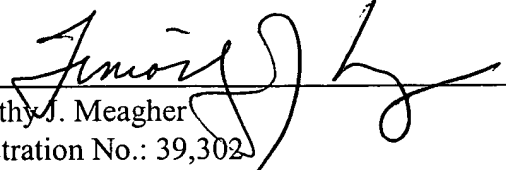
☒ A check in the amount of \$500 is enclosed.

☐ Please charge Deposit Account No. 08-0380 in the amount of \$[].

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees that may be due in this matter to Deposit Account No. 08-0380. A copy of this letter is enclosed for accounting purposes.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By 
Timothy J. Meagher
Registration No.: 39,302
Telephone: (978) 341-0036
Facsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133

Dated: 7/29/05

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

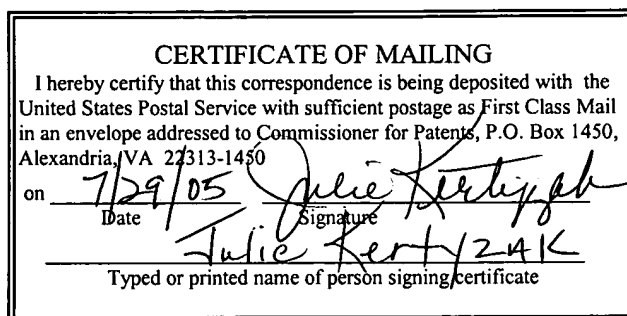
Appellant: Robert L. Stewart, Ramanathan R. Kavasseri and Sandra C. Durham

Application No.: 09/317,746 Group: 2162

Filed: May 24, 1999 Examiner: Isaac M. Woo

Confirmation No.: 9501

For: PRIORITIZING NETWORK MANAGEMENT TRAFFIC



APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This Appeal Brief is submitted pursuant to the Notice of Appeal received in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on June 27, 2005, and in support of the appeal from the final rejection set forth in the Office Action mailed on April 15, 2005. The fee for filing a brief in support of an appeal is enclosed.

I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST

The real party in interest is Cisco Technology, Inc., 170 West Tasman Drive, San Jose, California 95134-1706. Cisco Technology, Inc. is the Assignee of the entire right, title and interest in the subject application, by virtue of an Assignment recorded on August 18, 1999 at Reel 010170, Frames 0571-0580.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Appellants, the undersigned Attorney, and Assignee are not aware of any related appeals or interferences which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20-21, 23 and 27-34 have been finally rejected, and a copy appears in the Claims Appendix of this Brief. Claims 1-28 were amended in the Amendment filed on May 1, 2002. Claims 1, 3-5, 10, 18, 20-23 and 27-28 were amended in the Amendment filed on October 16, 2002. Claims 1, 3, 18, 20 and 27-28 were amended, claims 2, 4, 10, 15-17, 19, 22 and 24-26 were canceled, and claims 29-34 were added in the Amendment filed on April 11, 2003. Claims 11, 23 and 31 were amended in the Amendment filed on November 12, 2003. Claims 1, 18, 27-29 and 31-32 were amended in the Amendment filed on March 11, 2004. Replies without claim amendments were filed on September 21, 2004 and February 17, 2005.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments have been filed subsequent to the final rejection mailed April 15, 2005. Accordingly, the claim listing as presented in the amendment filed March 11, 2004 are the claims on appeal. A copy of the pending claims is listed in the Claims Appendix enclosed with this Appeal Brief.

V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

Appellants' invention is directed to method and apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element. The network management request may be, for example, a Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) request which is a request to retrieve or modify objects (information stored in a predefined format, for example, text strings, counter values) stored in the managed element (for example, router, terminal server, switch). In accordance with the present approach, the network management request received by the managed element is assigned a priority value by the

managed element based on a user or source identifier in a network management message wrapper included in the request. The user identifier identifies the user of an application from which the request was sent. The source identifier identifies the source of an application from which the request was sent. The network management request is scheduled by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

Referring to FIG. 1, for example, management station 102 communicates over network 100 with a managed element 104. FIG. 3 shows the format of an SNMP request 300 including a network management wrapper 302. FIG. 5 is a flow diagram of a method implemented in the managed element for prioritizing network management requests from network management applications. Referring to FIG. 5, using an agent 110 (FIG. 1) in the managed element 104, upon receiving an SNMP message 300, in step 502, the identification is extracted from the SNMP message wrapper 302. The identification in the message wrapper 302 may be a community identification, or a user identification or group identification, dependent on the version of SNMP implemented in the management station 102 and the managed element 104.

In step 504, using the identification extracted from the SNMP message 300, the agent determines the priority of the SNMP message 300 from local control data (LCD) (FIGs. 4A, 4B) stored in the managed element. For example, if an SNMPv3 message is sent from user #2, the user identification in the SNMP message wrapper 302 is set to the identification for user #2. The agent 110 uses the identification for user #2 to determine the assigned priority from the local control data.

In step 506, the agent 110 determines the priority of the SNMP message 300 dependent on the identification extracted from the LCD. In step 508, if the priority of the network management request in the SNMP message 300 is lower than the network management requests included in the SNMP messages 300 currently being processed, the SNMP message 300 may be added in order of priority to a pending queue, using any queuing algorithm known in the art.

In step 508, if the priority of the SNMP message 300 is higher than the priority of SNMP messages 300 on an active task queue currently being processed, the agent 110 may determine that the SNMP message 300 is to be processed immediately. To immediately process the network management request included in the SNMP message 300, the SNMP message 300 may be added to the front of the active task queue, using any queuing algorithm known in the art.

FIG. 7 shows a portion of the contents of a configuration file for another embodiment in which network management requests are prioritized dependent on a network source address assigned to a network management request received by the managed element. The source address may be, for example, an IP address. The configuration file is stored in the managed element. Upon receiving a network management request from a network management application in a management station 102, the agent 110 in the managed element 104 extracts the source address from the network management request. The agent 110 uses the source address to obtain the priority associated with the source address from the configuration file.

The network management request may be placed either at the front of the queue of active tasks or on a pending task queue, dependent on the priority of the network management request. Using the present approach, urgent network management requests can be processed before low priority network management requests and other tasks.

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Whether claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 27-34 are unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Dulman (U.S. Patent No. 5,802,146) in view of Kjorsvik *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,748,190).

VII. GROUPING OF CLAIMS

Group I: Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 27-34

The claims in Group I stand or fall together.

VIII. ARGUMENT

A. The Dulman patent ("Dulman")

Dulman is directed to the use of SNMP messages for monitoring network elements of a public switched telephone network. An operations console communicates SNMP messages to and from network elements via a packet switched network. A network element includes an error monitoring system that collects and generates an error status report. The network element converts the error status report to SNMP messages and outputs the SNMP messages to the

operations console. The operations console displays the SNMP messages (objects) together with operational priority that is assigned by the console.

Dulman discloses that the operating console can be kept up to date on the status of the network elements by regular polling of the network elements and that the operating console can initiate corrective measures by outputting SNMP objects to different network elements.

B. The Kjorsvik *et al.* patent (“Kjorsvik”)

Kjorsvik is directed to a presentation system for individual personal computers in a personal computer network. In lieu of displaying a screen saver on the screen of a personal computer that has been idle for a period of time, a repertoire of presentations stored in a system database located on a network server PC is provided for display on the personal computer. The repertoire of presentations takes the form of a series of successive slides or screen images.

C. The Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20-21, 23 and 27-34 (Group I herein) stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dulman in view of Kjorsvik. On pages 4-7 of the Final Office Action mailed April 15, 2005 (“Final Office Action”), the Examiner sets forth an argument combining the two references listed above.

With respect to independent claims 1, 18, 27-29 and 31-32, the Examiner indicates the view that Dulman discloses most of the claim limitations. In particular, the Examiner states that Dulman discloses assigning a priority value to the received network management request, citing column 4, lines 52-64; column 11, lines 34-57; and column 3, lines 23-32. The Examiner further states that Dulman discloses that the priority value is assigned by the managed element, referring to column 14, lines 58-67 and column 15, lines 1-28. Further, the Examiner points to the above-noted sections of Dulman to support the view that Dulman discloses scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

The Final Office Action states that Dulman does not explicitly disclose a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, where the user identifier is used to identify the user of an application from which the request was sent. The Examiner looks to Kjorsvik for this deficiency in Dulman, noting that Kjorsvik discloses:

[I]t is capable of displaying all the users in the network that have an installed messenger module. The individual users may be arranged into various groups according to the selection of the system operator, using the administration module 26. Each user is identified by a unique network identification (ID). Hence, a command to view the network users in the database 24 is provided through the administration module 26. The user's IDs and the individual presentations are contained in the system database 24. (Kjorsvik: column 3, lines 18-29)

The Examiner asserts that the foregoing teaches that the network computer has the capability to identify network users who communicate with it. With this combination, the Final Office Action states that it would have been obvious to a person having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Dulman by incorporating user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, and that one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to use such combination because it "would provide Dulman's system the identifying network user capability to provide network user identification for network communication in the network system." (Final Office Action: page 5)

In a section of the Final Office Action entitled "Response to arguments" (pages 2-3), the Examiner responds to Applicants' Remarks filed on February 17, 2005, the Applicants' Remarks summarized by the Examiner as follows:

Dulman (U.S. Patent No. 5,802,146) does not disclose or suggest, "prioritizing network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, prioritizing SNMP messages in the network element." Kjorsvik does not disclose or suggest, "user identifier in a network management wrapper." (Final Office Action: page 2)

The Examiner's response states disagreement with Applicants' Remarks. In particular, the Examiner states that Dulman discloses the MOC 32 (operations console) is kept up to date on the status of the AIN nodes by regular polling of the respective SNMP agents.

However, in cases where the AIN nodes may need to inform the MOC 32 of an extraordinary event without waiting to be polled, the SNMP agent 52 outputs a "trap." For example, when the IP 24 first comes on-line, the IP 24 may send a cold start trap to the MOC 32 in order to notify the MOC 32 of the existence of the IP 24. A trap tends to be a relatively simple structure, comprising one of six generic types, optional specific type information, the IP address of the originating agent and a reference to the MIB variable affected. (Dulman: column 13, lines 7-26)

The Examiner notes that since the network devices with SNMP agent in Dulman are “polled,” a network management request is “received.” Further, the Examiner states that the network devices (polled) and SNMP requests are prioritized, citing column 4, lines 52-64; column 11, lines 34-57; and column 3, lines 23-32 of Dulman for support, and concludes that Dulman discloses “prioritizing network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, prioritizing SNMP messages in a network element.”

With respect to Kjorsvik, the Examiner states the view that Kjorsvik discloses “user identifier in a network management wrapper,” to provide SNMP command wrapper for user ID, again citing column 3, lines 18-29 of Kjorsvik for support.

D. Appellants’ Argument

To establish a prima facie case for obviousness under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), (1) there must be some suggestion or motivation to combine reference teachings; (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success; (3) the references when combined must teach or suggest all the claim limitations. For the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner has not established a prima facie case under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) for claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20, 21, 23 and 27-34, and that therefore, claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20-21, 23, and 27-34 are allowable.

Dulman is concerned with sending SNMP requests from an operations console (the MOC 32) to network elements (e.g., IP 24), receiving SNMP objects relating to error reports from the network elements, assigning an operational priority to the received SNMP objects and displaying the operational priority of the received SNMP objects based on object relationships identified by a Management Information Base (MIB).

Dulman does not teach or suggest a method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, nor does Dulman teach or suggest prioritizing SNMP messages received in a managed element. Dulman merely discusses that the operating console (element MOC 32 in Dulman) can be kept up to date on the status of the network element by regular polling of the network elements and that the operating console can initiate corrective measures by outputting SNMP objects to different network elements. There is no discussion of how SNMP objects received by the network element are prioritized by the

network element. Dulman's discussion of the operation console assigning an operational priority to an error reported by a network element does not teach or suggest at least the Appellants' claimed "the priority value assigned by the managed element." Indeed, there is no discussion in Dulman of how SNMP messages received by the network element are handled at the network element.

Put simply, the prioritization in Dulman differs completely from the claimed invention. In particular, prioritization occurs in Dulman at an operations console which is more similar in function to the recited management station. In contrast, prioritization in the claimed invention is by the managed element. Dulman performs prioritization on SNMP objects related to error reports. These differ from the recited "network management requests" of the claimed invention. The SNMP objects received at the operations console in Dulman are not requests. Rather, they are of the nature of information that is typically returned in response to a request.

The purpose for prioritization in Dulman is related to operational priority and display at the operations console. In contrast, prioritization in the claimed invention occurs such that "scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value." Thus, it is clear that the Dulman reference differs substantially from the claimed invention as noted.

Kjorsvik's mere discussion of data being displayed on screens of personal computers and identifying users of the personal computers based on a unique network identifier does not suggest the Appellants' claimed "user identifier in a network management wrapper." Kjorsvik does not even discuss a network management wrapper, network management request or even data transfer from the network server to the network PC.

MPEP 2141.01(a) "Analogous and non-analogous art" states that to rely on a reference under 35 U.S.C. 103, such as in the present case, it must be analogous prior art, which Appellants urge Kjorsvik is not for reasons described further herein below. Further, MPEP 2141.01(a) states that

[t]he Examiner must determine what is "analogous prior art" for the purpose of analyzing the obviousness of the subject matter at issue. "In order to rely on a reference as a basis for rejection of an applicant's invention, the reference must either be in the field of applicant's endeavor or, if not, be reasonably pertinent to the particular problem with which the inventor was concerned." *In re Oetiker*, 977 F.2d 1443, 1446, 24 USPQ 2d 1443, 1445 (Fed.Cir. 1992). See also *In re*

Deminski, 796 F.2d 436, 230 USPQ 313 (Fed.Cir. 1986); *In re Clay*, 966 F.2d 656, 659, 23USPQ 2d 1058, 1060-61 (Fed. Cir. 1992) (“a reference is reasonably pertinent if, even though it may be in a different field from that of the inventor’s endeavor, it is one which, because of the subject matter with which it deals, logically would have commended itself to an inventor’s attention in considering his problem.”)

“Where the general scope of a reference is outside the pertinent field of endeavor, the reference may be considered analogous art if the subject matter disclosed therein is relevant to the particular problem with which the inventor is involved.” *State Contracting & Eng’g Corp. v Condotte America Inc.*, 346 F.3d 1057, 1069, 68 USPQ 2d 1481, 1490 (Fed. Cir. 2003).

In this case, the Kjorsvik reference is in a different, non-analogous field of endeavor because it involves a presentation system for individual PCs in a PC network, whereas the claimed invention relates to prioritizing network management requests by a managed element. The use of unique network identification in Kjorsvik is intended for identifying individual PC users at an administration module. In contrast, the user identifier in the claimed invention is used by a managed element to identify the user of an application from which a request was sent to the managed element. There is no communication of network management requests even occurring in Kjorsvik. Thus, one skilled in the art of network management would not look to the use of presentations (or screen savers) on personal computers to learn how to prioritize network requests.

Thus, the Office has not established a prima facie case under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) because (1) there is no suggestion or motivation to combine reference teachings (Dulman and Kjorsvik) and (2) even if combined, Dulman and Kjorsvik do not teach or suggest all the claim limitations as discussed above.

Furthermore, the failure of others to discuss assigning a priority value to the received network management request by the managed element is a secondary indication of non-obviousness. (*Graham v. John Deere*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966)).

As base Claims 1, 18, 27, 28, 29 and 30 recite novel subject matter, each of the dependent claims are also novel over Dulman and Kjorsvik, singly or in combination. The dependent claims also recite additional patentable limitations. Such limitations further distinguish the claimed invention and are not taught or suggested by Dulman and Kjorsvik, singly or in combination.

Claims 3, 20, and 33 recite that the priority value is added to “an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.” Dulman does not even discuss an authentication group or table in the network element.

Claims 5, 21, 23, and 34 recite “determining the priority value by using the extracted user identifier to index the authentication table.” Dulman does not even discuss how SNMP messages are processed by the network element.

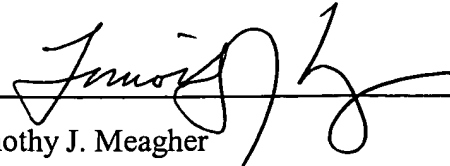
Claims 6 and 11 recite “selecting the order of execution of the network management request dependent on the determined priority value.” As already discussed, Dulman does not even discuss processing of SNMP messages received by a network element.

Claim 30 recites “the message is in the form of a Simple Network Management Request.” Dulman does not discuss processing of Simple Network Management Requests by a managed element.

Therefore, separately or in combination, Dulman and Kjorsvik do not teach or suggest the Appellants’ claimed invention. Thus, none of the cited prior art alone or in combination teaches or suggests the Appellants’ claimed invention directed to prioritizing a network management request. Accordingly, the present invention as now claimed is not believed to be anticipated or made obvious by the cited art. In view of the foregoing, removal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and acceptance of Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 11-14, 18, 20-21, 23 and 27-34 are respectively requested in view of this Appeal and arguments set forth above.

Respectfully submitted,

HAMILTON, BROOK, SMITH & REYNOLDS, P.C.

By 
Timothy J. Meagher
Registration No. 39,302
Telephone: (978) 341-0036
Facsimile: (978) 341-0136

Concord, MA 01742-9133

Date: 7/29/05

CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (Previously Presented) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:
 - upon receiving a network management request, assigning a priority value to the received network management request, the priority value assigned by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and
 - scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 1 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:
 - adding a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.
4. (Canceled).
5. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the steps of:
 - extracting a user identifier from the received network management request; and
 - determining the priority value by using the extracted user identifier to index the authentication table.
6. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 5 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:
 - selecting the order of execution of the network management request dependent on the determined priority value.

7. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
 - preempting the currently executing task if the determined value for the management request is higher than the currently executing task.
8. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
 - adding the management request to the end of a request queue if the determined priority is lower than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
9. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 6 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
 - adding the management request to the front of a request queue if the determined priority is higher than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
10. (Canceled).
11. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 3 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:
 - selecting the order of execution of the network management request dependent on the determined priority value.
12. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
 - preempting a currently executing task if the determined value for the management request is higher than the currently executing task

13. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
 - adding the management request to the bottom of a request queue if the determined priority is lower than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
14. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 11 wherein the step of selecting further comprises the step of:
 - adding the management request to the top of a request queue if the determined priority is higher than the priority of the tasks in the request queue.
- 15 - 17. (Canceled).
18. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:
 - a priority assignment routine which upon receiving a network management request assigns a priority value to the received network management request, the priority value assigned in the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and
 - a network management request routine which schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.
19. (Canceled).
20. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 18 wherein the priority assignment routine further comprises:
 - a priority value assignment routine which adds a priority value to an authentication group comprising a plurality of users, in an authentication table.

21. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 20 wherein the network management routine further comprises:
- a user identification extraction routine which extracts a user identifier from the network management request; and
 - a priority value extraction routine which determines the priority value by using the extracted user identifier to index the authentication table.
22. (Canceled).
23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 18 wherein the network management routine further comprises:
- a source identification extraction routine which extracts the user identifier from the network management request; and
 - a priority value determination routine which determines the priority value using the extracted user identifier to index the source identification table.
- 24 - 26.(Canceled).
27. (Previously Presented) An apparatus for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising:
- a priority assignment routine;
 - a network management request scheduler;
 - upon receiving a network management request, means, within the priority assignment routine, for assigning a priority value to the received network management request, the priority value assigned in the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the network management request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and
 - means, within the network management request scheduler, for scheduling the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

28. (Previously Presented) A computer program product for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, the computer program product comprising a computer usable medium having computer readable code thereon, including program code which:
- upon receiving a network management request, assigns a priority value to the received network management request, the priority value assigned by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management header included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of the application from which the request was sent; and
 - schedules the network management request in the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.
29. (Previously Presented) A method for prioritizing a message requesting information stored in a managed element, the message being sent by a management station to the managed element, comprising the steps of:
- upon receiving a network management request, assigning a priority value to the received message, the priority value assigned by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the request was sent; and
 - scheduling the message, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.
30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 29 wherein the message is in the form of a Simple Network Management Request.

31. (Previously Presented) A method for prioritizing a Simple Network Management Protocol message sent by a management station to the managed element, comprising the steps of:

upon receiving a network management request, assigning a priority value to the received Simple Network Management Protocol message, the priority assigned by the managed element dependent upon a user identifier in a network management wrapper included in the message, the user identifier identifying the user of an application from which the message was sent; and

scheduling the message, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

32. (Previously Presented) A method for prioritizing a network management request sent by a management station to a managed element, comprising the steps of:

upon receiving a network management request, assigning a priority value to the received network management request, the priority assigned by the managed element dependent upon a source identifier in a network management wrapper included in the request, the source identifier identifying the source of an application from which the request was sent; and

scheduling the network management request, by the managed element dependent on the assigned priority value.

33. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 32 wherein the step of assigning further comprises the step of:

adding a priority value to the source identifier in a source identification table.

34. (Previously Presented) The method as claimed in Claim 33 wherein the step of scheduling further comprises the step of:

extracting the source identifier from the network management request; and

determining the priority value by using the extracted source identifier to index the source identification table.

EVIDENCE APPENDIX

(None)

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RELATED PROCEEDINGS APPENDIX

(None)